

U.S. Comments on Article In Times About Warheads

WASHINGTON, Nov. 21—A dispatch published today in The New York Times from its Washington bureau that said that the United States secretly mounted nuclear warheads on planes and missiles of West Germany and other North Atlantic Allies during the last six years drew the following statement from the Defense Department:

"It is Department of Defense policy not to discuss location, numbers or operations involving

nuclear weapons. No matter where they are located, United States warheads are always under U.S. custody."

The first sentence of this declaration was identical with a Pentagon statement given to The Times before publication of the dispatch and included in it.

The Times article, by John W. Finney, said American control of the nuclear weapons has at times "existed more in principle than in fact." It also said that only in recent years "have the controls been strengthened to the point where unauthorized use of the warheads by an ally can be regarded as a highly unlikely possibility."